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U.S. Patent Appln. No. 10/608,629
Attorney Docket No.: 27799-023

Listing of Claims:

The following listing of claims hereby replaces any previously filed listing.

1.   **(currently amended)**   An apparatus for transporting items for purchase at a checkout location comprising:

a conveyor having an upstream end for loading one or more items for purchase;

a scanning processing area positioned proximate a downstream end of from the conveyor for scanning processing one or more items for purchase received from the downstream end of the conveyor, wherein the one or more items having been previously loaded onto the upstream end of the conveyor and transported to the downstream end;

a user proximity sensor positioned at the scanning area for sensing a user at the scanning processing area;

a start sensor positioned proximate the upstream at a first end of the conveyor located farthest from the processing area, wherein the conveyor transports one or more items toward the scanning area upon the start sensor sensing the one or more items placed adjacent thereto on the conveyor, prior to the proximity sensor sensing a user; and

a stop sensor positioned proximate the downstream at a second end of the conveyor near the scanning processing area, wherein the conveyor is stopped upon one or more items being sensed by the stop sensor.

2.   **(Canceled)**.

3.   **(Canceled)**.

4.   (original)   The apparatus according to claim 1, further wherein the start sensor comprises a plurality of sensors.

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5.   (original)   The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the start sensors are positioned one after the other in a transporting direction at the first end of the conveyor.

6.   (original)   The apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the start sensors are spaced apart from one another a predetermined distance.

7.   (original)   The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein a last sensor of the plurality of sensors is positioned such that a last item is positioned within a reaching distance of a processing area after passing the last sensor.

8.   (original) The apparatus according to claim 7, wherein upon the last item clearing the last sensor, the conveyor stops.

9.   **(currently amended)**   A method for transporting items along a conveyor in a checkout system comprising:

        providing a self-checkout system comprising a conveyor having an upstream end for loading one or more items for purchase, a scanning area positioned proximate a downstream end of the conveyor for scanning one or more items for purchase received from the downstream end of the conveyor, wherein the one or more items having been previously loaded onto the upstream end of the conveyor and transported to the downstream end, a user proximity sensor provided at the scanning area for sensing a user at the scanning area, a start sensor positioned proximate the upstream end of the conveyor for starting the conveyor, and a stop sensor positioned proximate the downstream end of the conveyor near the scanning area;

        starting the ~~a~~ conveyor in a ~~transporting~~ direction toward the downstream end upon a first item for purchase being placed in proximity to the ~~a~~ start sensor on the conveyor prior to a user being sensed by the ~~a~~ user proximity sensor ~~provided at a processing area~~;

        transporting the first item beyond the start sensor;

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stopping the conveyor prior to the first item reaching <u>the downstream</u> <s>an</s> end of the conveyor if the user proximity sensor <u>senses</u> <s>indicates</s> that a user is absent at the <u>scanning</u> <s>processing</s> area;

transporting the first item toward the <u>downstream</u> end of the conveyor if the user proximity sensor indicates a user is present at the <u>scanning</u> <s>processing</s> area;

transporting the first item toward the <u>downstream</u> <s>second</s> end of the conveyor upon a second item being placed in proximity to the start sensor; and

stopping the conveyor upon the first item being sensed by <u>the</u> <s>a</s> stopping sensor.

10.   **(Canceled).**

11.   **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 9, wherein upon the user being present <u>near the scanning</u> <s>in the checkout</s> area, and upon the first item being removed from the conveyor <u>near the scanning area</u>, the conveyor is operated for a predetermined time interval or until a second item is sensed by the stopping sensor.

12.   **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 9, wherein upon a user being absent from the <u>scanning</u> <s>checkout</s> area, the first item is transported to a position beyond the start sensor.

13.   **(currently amended)** The method according to claim 12, wherein upon a user being absent from the <u>scanning</u> <s>checkout</s> area, the conveyor moves in <u>toward the downstream end</u> <s>the transporting direction</s> upon one or more additional items being placed in proximity to the start sensor.

14.   (original) The method according to claim 13, wherein upon the one or more additional items reaching the stop sensor, the conveyor is stopped.

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15.   **(currently amended)**   The method according to claim 9, wherein upon the conveyor moving in the transporting direction, the method further comprises stopping the conveyor via a manual switch.

16.   **(Canceled).**

17.   **(currently amended)** A self-checkout system comprising:

a conveyor <u>having an upstream end for loading one or more items for purchase</u>;

<u>a bagging area;</u>

a <u>scanning</u> ~~processing~~ area positioned <u>proximate a</u> downstream <u>end of</u> ~~from~~ the conveyor <u>and between the downstream end of the conveyor and the bagging area, the scanning area</u> for <u>scanning</u> ~~processing~~ one or more items for purchase <u>received from the downstream end of the conveyor, wherein the one or more items having been previously loaded on the upstream end of the conveyor and transported to the downstream end</u>;

a start sensor positioned <u>proximate</u> at a first end of the conveyor located farthest from the processing area, wherein the conveyor transports one or more items upon the start sensor sensing the one or more items <u>placed adjacent thereto on the conveyor</u>;

a stop sensor positioned at a second end of the conveyor, wherein the conveyor is stopped upon one or more items being sensed by the stop sensor; and

a user proximity sensor <u>provided at the sensing area</u> for sensing the proximity of a user to processing area.

18.   (original) The self-checkout system according to claim 17, wherein the conveyor starts upon an item being placed in proximity to the start sensor.

19.   **(Canceled).**

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20. (previously presented) The self-checkout system according to claim 17, wherein the start sensor comprises a plurality of sensors.

21. (original) The self-checkout system according to claim 20, wherein the start sensors are positioned one after the other in a transporting direction at the first end of the conveyor.

22. (original) The self-checkout system according to claim 20, wherein the start sensors are spaced apart from one another a predetermined distance.

23. (original) The self-checkout system according to claim 22, wherein a last sensor of the plurality of sensors is positioned such that a last item is positioned within a reaching distance of a processing area after passing the last sensor.

24. (original) The self-checkout system according to claim 23, wherein upon the last item clearing the last sensor, the conveyor stops.

25. **(currently amended)** A computer readable media having computer instructions provided thereon for allowing a computer system to perform a method for transporting items along a conveyor for a checkout system, the method comprising:

starting a conveyor in a ~~transporting~~ direction toward a downstream end upon a first item for purchase being placed on the conveyor in proximity to a start sensor provided at an upstream end of the conveyor prior to a user being sensed by a user proximity sensor provided at a scanning area;

transporting the first item beyond the start sensor;

stopping the conveyor prior to the first item reaching the downstream ~~an~~ end of the conveyor if the user proximity sensor senses ~~indicates~~ that a user is absent at the scanning ~~processing~~ area;

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transporting the first item toward the <u>downstream</u> end of the conveyor if the user proximity sensor indicates a user is present at the <u>scanning</u> ~~processing~~ area;

transporting the first item toward the <u>downstream</u> ~~second~~ end of the conveyor upon a second item being placed in proximity to the start sensor; and

stopping the conveyor upon the first item being sensed by <u>the</u> ~~a~~ stopping sensor.

26.   (**currently amended**) An application program operable on a computer system for performing a method for transporting items along a conveyor for a checkout system, the method comprising:

starting a conveyor in a ~~transporting~~ direction <u>toward a downstream end</u> upon a first item <u>for purchase</u> being placed <u>on the conveyor</u> in proximity to a start sensor <u>provided at an upstream end of the conveyor</u> prior to a user being sensed by a user proximity sensor provided at a <u>scanning</u> area;

transporting the first item beyond the start sensor;

stopping the conveyor prior to the first item reaching <u>the downstream</u> ~~an~~ end of the conveyor if the user proximity sensor <u>senses</u> ~~indicates~~ that a user is absent at the <u>scanning</u> ~~processing~~ area;

transporting the first item toward the <u>downstream</u> end of the conveyor if the user proximity sensor indicates a user is present at the <u>scanning</u> ~~processing~~ area;

transporting the first item toward the <u>downstream</u> ~~second~~ end of the conveyor upon a second item being placed in proximity to the start sensor; and

stopping the conveyor upon the first item being sensed by <u>the</u> ~~a~~ stopping sensor.